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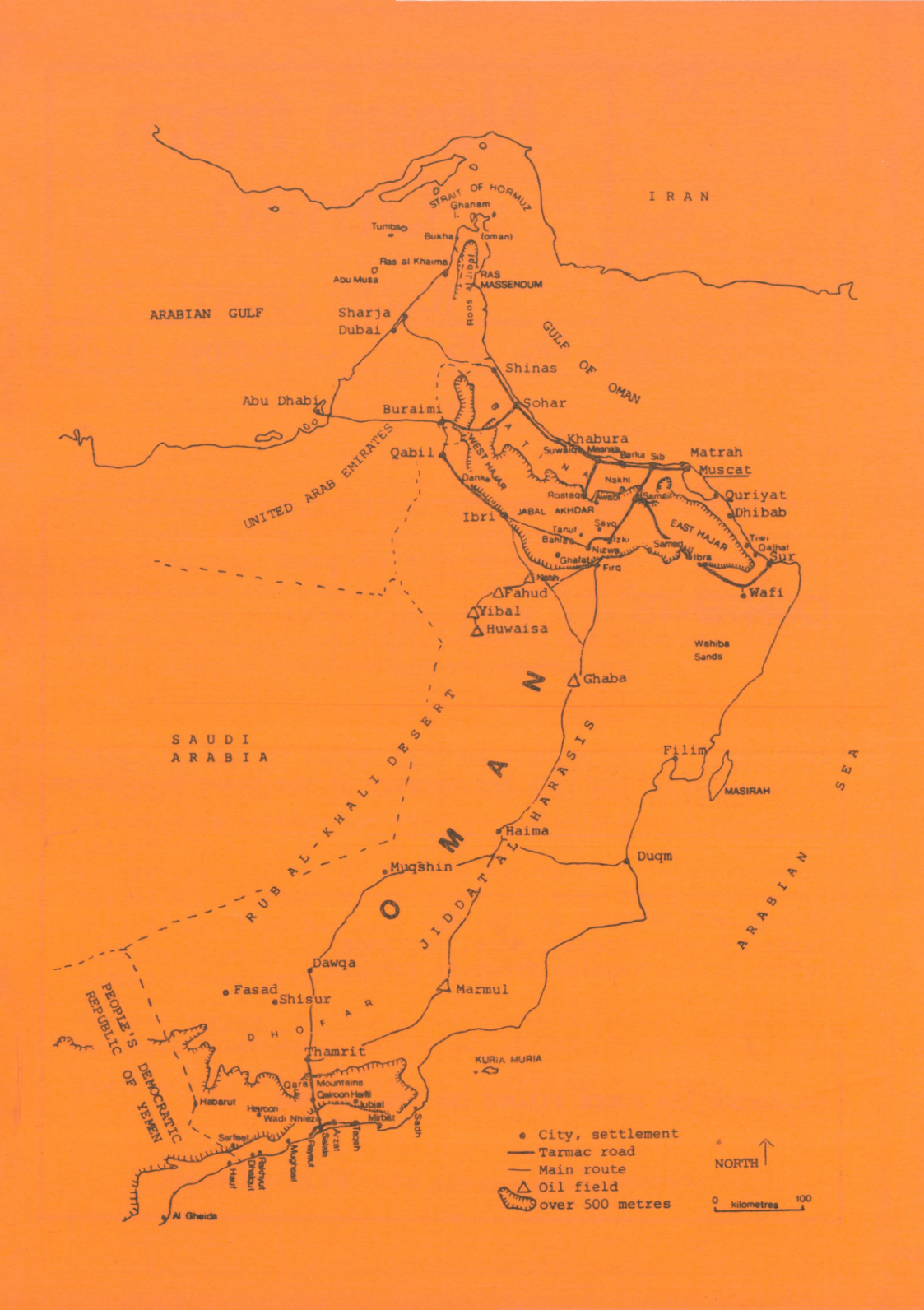
CONTENTS

PFLO CHIEF OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPEAKS TO SAUT AL-THAWRA
on occasion of the 14th Anniversary of the Omani Revolution

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GULF
Interview with Hussein Musa, representative of the Popular Front in Bahrain

RHODESIAN AIR FORCE PILOTS TRAINED IN OMAN


IRAN
STRAIT OF HORMUZ
Ghanam I.
Tumbs
Bukha
(Oman)
Ras al Khaima
Abu Musa
RAS MASSENDUM
ARABIAN GULF
Sharja
Dubai
Roos Al Jibal
GULF OF OMAN
Shinas
Abu Dhabi
Buraimi
Sohar
Khabura
Suwaiq
Masnaa
Barka
Sib
Matrah
Muscat
Qabil
WEST HAJAR
Nakhl
Rostaq
Awabi
Samail
Quriyat
Dhibab
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Ibri
JABAL AKHDAR
Tanuf
Bahla
Izki
Nizwa
Ghafat
Firq
Natih
EAST HAJAR
Samad
Ibra
Tiwi
Qalhat
Sur
Wafi
Fahud
Yibal
Huwaisa
Wahiba Sands
Ghaba
SAUDI ARABIA
RUB AL-KHALI DESERT
OMAN
JIDDAT AL HARASIS
Filim
MASIRAH
ARABIAN SEA
Haima
Muqshin
Duqm
Dawqa
Fasad
Shisur
Marmul
DHOFAR
Thamrit
KURIA MURIA
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
Habarut
Qara Mountains
Qairoon Hairiti
Dubqat
Mirbat
Hayroon
Wadi Nhiez
Sadh
Sarfayt
Mughsail
Rakhyut
Ghaibah
Haaf
Al Gheida
City, settlement
Tarmac road
Main route
Oil field
over 500 metres
NORTH
0
kilometres
100

PFLO CHIEF OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPEAKS TO SAUT AL-THAWRA

Comrade Abdul Aziz Al-Qadhi gave an interview to Saut al-Thawra on the occasion of the 14th Anniversary of the Omani revolution. Comrade Al-Qadhi's remarks mainly concerned the political situation in the Arabian Gulf.

Q: The Arab world, including the Gulf area, has experienced a number of important political developments during the last two years. What is the Front's analysis of these developments and of their effect on the revolution and on the state of affairs in Oman (the Sultanate).

A: We note, first of all, that the political situation in the Middle East as a whole and the Gulf area in particular has been characterized by rapid changes which continue and, at times, achieve great leaps which far surpass the ordinary rate of change or evolution. We believe that the current developments center around two very important political events affecting the lives of the people of the region, the political situation in general and particularly the different revolutionary movements in the area. These two outstanding events, to a very large extent, are the context for the rest of the events and changes. They are the success of the national liberation revolution in Iran and the signing of the American peace treaty between Israel and the Sadat regime. There is no doubt that these two events have completely changed the political situation in the entire region and have generated a number of actions, reactions and shifts both among the forces of imperialism, reaction and Zionism and among the various revolutionary movements.

The first event, the success of the national revolution in Iran, produced extensive positive results which benefit all the revolutionary forces and all the peoples of the region. It has also produced new forms of hostilities from the imperialist camp, which is led by the United States of America, and its stooges in the area. The success of the revolution in Iran has created a crisis in the balance of power in the region and in the struggle between the peoples of the area and their progressive and revolutionary movements on the one hand and their foes on the other. This crisis no doubt benefits the first party - the people of the region and their progressive and revolutionary movements - and will continue to do so.

The Iranian revolutionary command has so far succeeded in achieving important accomplishments and gains in the objectives for which the Iranian people fought. The foremost of these were the collapse of the imperial regime of the Shah forever and the rise of the republican regime in its place and the abrogation of the entire foreign policy of the Shah's regime which had been based on expansionism, chauvinism, aggression and interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states and on assuming the role of a powerful policeman who defended imperialist interests.

The Iranian revolution also achieved other important victories, namely its withdrawal from the imperialist and reactionary military defense pact in the region known as CENTO and the decision to withdraw the Iranian forces previously sent by the Shah to fight against the people of Oman and their revolution. These gains are as significant as the struggle of the Iranian people and the ends for which they are fighting. To the peoples of the adjacent region and, particularly to the peoples of the Gulf, who are looking forward to their liberty, progress and peace, the end of the Iranian role is very important.

The Iranian revolution and all its achievements have primary significance because they succeeded in disarming one of the strongest weapons employed by imperialism, particularly US imperialism, in its global aggressive and destructive strategy. The destruction of the Shah's regime and the establishment of a new regime hostile to the presence of imperialism, aggression and expansionism offers a very great service to the many current struggles for liberation and progress and to the universal struggle for peace and for the right of peoples to self determination.

With regard to us, the people of Oman, the success of the Iranian revolution means a very big gain for our anti-imperialist struggle to oust foreign forces from Oman and to achieve real independence, liberty, democracy and progress for the people of Oman. We feel close ties with the events in Iran; these victories affect us and our struggle more than they do any other people but the people of Iran themselves. This is especially true in light of the aggressive and expansionist policy that was followed by the Shah's regime and in light of the current policy of complete sub-

ordination to the West and to imperialism followed by the prevailing regime in Oman. Its readiness to squander our national rights and sovereignty without restraint made the Sultanate, before the collapse of the Shah, to a very large extent a mere appendage of the Shah's imperial regime and made Oman part of his empire.

The Shah's regime, along with the other foreign forces, played the role in our country of the advocate and strong defender of the regime in Oman even when this led to the killing of hundreds of the sons and daughters of our land and to driving thousands of them, from all walks of life, to the status of refugees. We therefore feel that the success of the Iranian revolution in dismantling the Shah's regime along with all his policies of chauvinism and expansionism constitutes a very important gain for the struggle of our people for their liberaty and independence. In other words, it is a victory for the joint struggle of the Omani and Iranian peoples against the Shah and his policies and against imperialism.

The decision to withdraw Iranian forces from our country no doubt hastens the day of deliverance of our people from the yoke of occupation by foreign invaders. On that victorious day we will establish a peaceful and democratic regime in our country. The current policy followed by the national regime in Iran, which is at loggerheads with imperialism but supports liberation movements in the area, has much significance for the future of the revolution in our country as well as in other countries struggling against imperialism for their liberation and development. The victorious Iranian revolution against the Shah and his aggressive policies, which were completely loyal to the West and to imperialism, has changed Iran from a strong and effective asset in the camp of counter-revolution to the other extreme of an ally of the revolutionary and progressive movement in the area and throughout the world. No doubt this magnificent change will have very important results that will be crystallized in the future when the Iranian revolution consolidates its gains and achieves new ones in its struggle against imperialism and for democracy and progress for the Iranian people. These future achievements will no doubt have important implications for the future

growth of the Omani revolution.

The world imperialist powers, in particular US imperialism, have expressed extraordinary consternation at the triumphs achieved by the Iranian revolution. American imperialism is now moving on many fronts to salvage its interests in the region, and it is rearranging its position so as to best protect these interests. The imperialist maneuvers in the region fall in two political directions.

The first direction is the military activities of the imperialist powers in the region. The most prominent is the formation of the so-called fifth fleet, which has been given the assignment of a continuous presence in the vicinity of the Arabian Gulf to be in constant readiness to interfere against the peoples of the region.

The formation of this fleet and its stationing near the shores of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf undoubtedly constitutes a direct threat to the peoples of these areas and to their security and is an aggressive act directed against them by American imperialism. There are also repeated US declarations on the formation of the so-called American Emergency Force which is to be ready at any time to move to any place in the area to suppress the people under the false slogan of protecting the oil fields.

The intention of US imperialism is to frighten the peoples of the Peninsula and the Gulf by threatening them with the big stick. It is an act of flagrant aggression aimed at reinforcing its presence in the area by force of arms. Direct intervention follows from the victory of the Iranian revolution and the resultant changes in political alignments of the entire area. Further came the signing of the bilateral peace treaty between Israel and the Sadat regime under the American umbrella and also the expansion and modernization of the American bases in the area especially those at Masirah in the Sultanate of Oman and at Jafeer in Bahrain. It is very likely that the US military, in cooperation with its Iranian allies and the remnants of the Savak apparatus, was able to transfer from Iran some of the most important electronic equipment to Masirah and Bahrain.

Intensive preparations are underway for the extension of the base at Masirah to become a joint British-American

strategic base for the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Another aspect of the military buildup is continuous shipment of American weapons together with technical experts and Central Intelligence Agency personnel to the regimes that support imperialism in the area, the foremost one being the regime in Muscat, Oman. At the same time the British military forces stationed in the Sultanate of Oman have now increased manyfold in the aftermath of the triumph of the Iranian revolution and the withdrawal of Iranian forces from Oman. The latest information available to us is that the number of British forces in our country, including officers and other ranks, has reached 1350.

In the Muscat regime imperialism has found a faithful and obedient servant who never refuses an order or assignment. This role has enhanced the political isolation of the regime in the Arab world and its lack of any popular political base to insure its survival inside the country. This is especially true after the Israeli-Sadat peace treaty which has been blessed by the regime in Muscat and by the arrival in the Sultanate of advance detachments from the Egyptian army at the request of Sultan Qabus and with the approval of the imperialist powers. Sadat is only too willing to play the role of the servant who defends imperialist interests and reactionary regimes that have been rejected by the people themselves.

The second basic direction in the new imperialist strategy and tactics is in the political, economic and social spheres. There is no doubt that imperialism, particularly the US, is basing its thinking on its painful experience in Iran and the strong blow it received at the hands of the Iranian revolution. Therefore it plans to rearrange a number of political, economic and social conditions in the area and in the peninsula as a whole.

The strategy of the current imperialist campaign therefore includes the introduction of a number of reforms in the administrative and political life of friendly regimes where important US interests are at stake. Socio-economic reforms are planned to exploit a large part of the oil revenue for the improvement of living conditions and social norms in a number of regimes, first and foremost the one in Muscat. The Iranian revolution has proven, beyond any doubt, that

weapons and military forces alone cannot guarantee the protection of the imperialist presence and of its interests in the area nor can they protect the various regimes that are rejected by the masses. It is therefore imperative that all branches of the revolutionary movement in the area prepare for the likely introduction of social changes and limited improvements to their countries, with ulterior motives, as well as for the direct participation of US imperialism. We believe that these changes and improvements aim to reduce the extent of the blatant and backward tyranny which is even more prominent in some countries of the region than in our own.

What interests the imperialist powers most is the maintenance of their interests, the leading one, which of course is oil. This necessarily requires that the political structure of the regimes friendly to the US continue to remain subordinate to the imperialist powers regardless of the faces, personalities, or names and even of the political system of this or that ruler who remains under the influence of imperialism. The continuation of the tyrannical, individual, tribal and backward forms of rule in a number of states in the area, particularly odious in the Sultanate of Oman, under present circumstances no doubt constitutes a threat to the conuation of the imperialist interests and to the survival of the regimes that support imperialism as well. This type of rule increasingly interferes with and prevents the development of the consciousness of the people in the area and of their political movements and aspirations toward real independence and democratic life in all economic, social and cultural spheres. Therefore, more than ever before, imperialism will try to relax the political, economic and social climates in several countries of the region solely to protect its interests.

The second prominent event in our region is the ratification of the treacherous treaty of surrender between Sadat and Israel in accordance with the needs and dictates of the United States and Israel. We consider the reconciliation and peace treaty between the Sadat and Israeli regimes to be no more than a new tripartite military pact directed against all the peoples of the Arab world and against the neighboring countries outside the Arab world, Africa for example. Its purpose is to subjugate the entire area to

the imperialist powers and the Zionist regime and to preserve the economic interests of imperialism and Zionism in this sensitive area and also to serve the aggressive and destructive strategy of world imperialism against the people. The treaty of reconciliation or peace, i.e. the American-Israeli-Sadat pact, offered nothing positive whatsoever, neither on the Egyptian national side, on the side of the Palestinian people, nor on the national side in general. It calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai to be replaced by new occupation forces: bases manned by American armed forces. Over and above this, the doors of Egypt have been opened to a new form of occupation and economic colonialism. In accordance with this agreement, Egypt will more and more come under complete subordination to American imperialism and will become an ally and partner in the imperialist-zionist strategy in the area which is directed against the people of Egypt themselves, the Arab nation as a whole, the struggling peoples of Africa and against socialist states and progressive regimes the world over.

The various branches of the Palestinian revolution have agreed on a set political program representing the minimum demands of the Arab people of Palestine, a program based on the right of self-determination, return of those in exile and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. However, the American-Israeli-Sadat peace agreement in practice fulfills none of the minimum demands of the aforementioned program. On the contrary it sanctifies the Zionist occupation of Palestinian land under the deceitful, deformed and deceptive banner of "self-rule". This maneuver has been rejected by all Palestinians and by all the different branches of the Palestinian resistance movement. In the national sphere, Sadat has withdrawn Egypt, with all its human, economic and military resources, from the Arab struggle against Israel and has completely abandoned the national obligations vis-a-vis the liberation of Arab lands which remain under occupation after the transfer of Sinai from one type of foreign occupation to another. This deceitful agreement will no doubt encourage the Zionist enemy to be more obstinate and arrogant in clinging to occupied Arab territory and encourage them to follow more expansionist and aggressive policies. What Sadat did was not only to withdraw

Egypt from the national conflict but, in accordance with this agreement, to turn it into a party fighting as a member of the imperialist and Zionist alliance.

Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, which concluded the ratification of the alliance-peace agreement, was confronted by united Arab opposition, not only from the Egyptian and Arab masses, but from all Arab regimes, with all their differing political views. This opposition was reflected in the resolutions of the Baghdad summit and in the conference of the Arab foreign and economic ministers that culminated in the rejection of the treaty and the imposition of penalties as a deterrent to Sadat and his treachery.

This rejection and these penalties, under the present Arab political conditions, represent only a minimum requirement and all Arab regimes must adhere to its implementation. The Muscat and Khartoum regimes deviated from the Arab unanimity and solidarity, which rejected the treacherous conciliation, and agreed to Sadat's steps by expressing their approval for the agreement. The regime of Muscat (Oman) is much more enthusiastic than that of the Sudan over the Sadat initiative. Without any reservations, Muscat sided with Sadat's actions and declarations. This acquiescence has aroused, at various levels, the disapproval and resentment of all Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

In actual fact, the Muscat and Khartoum regimes are only two additional parties that imperialism has included as partners under the umbrella of the new American-Israeli-Sadat military pact. The joint defense treaty between the Sadat regime and the Numeiri regime and the sending of American military experts and Sadat's forces to the aid of the Muscat regime are only the most visible evidence.

Sadat's treacherous acts, finally crowned with the so-called peace treaty with Israel, in spite of its aggressive nature toward the Arab and Palestinian causes, have in fact turned against the wishes of Sadat. Imperialism and Zionism gave and will continue to give rise to a group of positive developments within the Arab revolutionary movement. The most prominent of these positive developments was, on the Arab official side, the establishment for the first time of the Confrontation and Steadfastness Front and, on the popular side, also for the first time, broad

conferences in addition to the unity pact between Syria and Iraq and the broadened resolutions of the Arab summit. These phenomena represent new types of struggle and provide a response to the plot to liquidate the Arab movement in general and the Palestinian movement in particular.

The Confrontation and Steadfastness Front and the Arab People's Conference are phenomena which positively serve the cause of the Arab revolution, although we feel that these two organizations continue to suffer from a number of negative attitudes and weaknesses. Nevertheless, these two organizations are assets for the Arab struggle against imperialism and Zionism and should be protected. More efforts should be exerted by the revolutionary forces to safeguard these assets and to eliminate their negative attitudes and weakness and thus to increase their effectiveness in the Arab struggle. It is regrettable that the Confrontation and Steadfastness Front has not met since the signing of the American-Israeli-Sadat peace treaty.

The resolutions passed by the 9th Arab summit conference in Baghdad are the minimum required at this juncture on the Arab official side. They are directed primarily against Sadat and his regime with the object of overthrowing him and of setting up obstacles to the implementation of the treaty. But they do not, for example, mention the nature of the strong connection between Sadat and his maneuvers on the one hand and the planned action for the total liquidation of the area's revolutionary forces. They also do not mention the reality of the strong connection between Israel and world imperialism and between the struggle for the rights of the Palestinian people and the struggle against imperialism and its interests in the area. Nor do they mention the connection of these two things with the necessity for struggle against the other regimes who gave their approval to the agreement and who are falling into line behind the military pact which is directed against the Arab nation. They do not mention the importance of removing these regimes which are obstacles to the enormous struggle capacity of the Arab peoples and thereby exploiting it for the benefit of the Arab struggle for liberation, progress and unity. These stands must be demanded from the Arab Confrontation and

Steadfastness Front and from the Arab People's Conference. In a broad Arab summit conference like the 9th Baghdad conference, we do not expect nor do we hope for more than the resolutions passed. Anything more would not be in conformity with its nature, position or structure; but we consider the resolutions passed to be good as a minimum. Our duty now is to implement these resolutions vis-a-vis the genuine comprehensive program of confrontation which is urgently required from the Confrontation and Steadfastness Front and also from the Arab People's Conference. Thus the measures that have been taken by Sadat, in spite of their stinking odor of injustice, did give something positive in the sense that they have helped, to a great extent, to change the overall Arab political stance from one of almost complete stagnation and of almost complete domination and hegemony by the reactionary forces over Arab political and diplomatic life to a new situation and a new posture distinguishable by its vitality. This new state of affairs inaugurates an historical watershed between the national powers on the one hand and the forces totally linked and pledged to the world imperialist camp on the other.

Sadat's steps have removed the blindfolds from our people's eyes and destroyed all their illusions while helping to clarify many vague aspects. This historical development is only in its initial stages and we expect more sorting out and shifting in the Arab situation. This will eventually benefit the development of the Arab revolutionary movement in both its national and class aspects. In addition, the pact of unity between Syria and Iraq, which came as a direct product of the new situation and its new challenges, is considered to be a positive step that should be encouraged and struggled for in order to bring it into existence in practice.

All these developments, clarifications and shifts benefit the various branches of the Arab revolutionary movement of which our revolution is a part. For the first time in the history of our revolution, clearcut resolutions have been passed by an Arab conference composed of four national Arab states - the states of confrontation and steadfastness, plus the PLO. These resolutions support the just struggle of our people and condemn the policy of the

traitor in Muscat and the presence of foreign troops in our country. For the first time more than one hundred organizations, parties and labor unions assembled in one joint conference and issued plain and prudent resolutions supporting the struggle of our people and their just cause. This is a new and important gain and a phenomenon that did not previously exist.

Today the Muscat regime is suffering from a suffocating political isolation throughout the Arab world, not only in the popular field but also in the general Arab official field. All the events of the past few years have proven the correctness of the analyses and evaluations that have been persistently been put forward by the Front on the nature of the regime and its lack of the simplest means of defending its national sovereignty. This regime threw itself on the bosom of world imperialism and does not possess any real means of running the internal and external affairs of the country. This reality has been confirmed and reinforced by the stream of events and, at present, as was the case in the past and particularly since the coming to power of Qabus, there is no other system of government anywhere in the Arab world that lacks the real power in running the affairs of its country more than Oman or is willing to make itself such a faithful servant to the real power that holds the reins of power in the country. In Oman this foreign power is represented by the British, now joined by American experts and advisers.

Q: About two years have passed since the Front, in its transitional program, presented the slogan of self-reconstruction in all respects, political and military. To what extent has the Front succeeded in reconstruction, and what are its most important achievements in this field?

A: The task of reconstructing the Front and the necessary subjective conditions for the revolution is actually a continuous function which has been part of the revolution from its inception to the resent. It is not restricted to a particular stage or a particular time; but this as set out in our transitional regional program that we have been fol-

lowing the last two years, is considered to be a basic and central one on which all our efforts should be concentrated on a much wider scale than the other tasks of the struggle. This task is at the forefront of the current transitional program in view of the circumstances the revolution underwent in previous years. It is also necessitated by the natural developments in the material circumstances of our people and our country. We always say that the process of reconstruction of the subjective conditions is a comprehensive and complicated matter, especially with regard to our transitional program and to the nature of the tasks set out in this program in all spheres, political, military and so forth. In a process of this sort, it is very difficult to quantitatively measure progress as it is a manysided operation which, among other things, includes the reconstruction of the struggling man and woman politically, militarily and ideologically in addition to the strengthening of the organizational forms of the Front as well as the struggle among the people in all its forms, conditions and activities, needed by this struggle. In general, we feel that we have achieved many important aims which are included in the tasks laid down in our program. For example, under the banner of the slogans spelled out in our program, we have been able to ascertain the negative positions that have arisen directly from the temporary military setback suffered by our forces in the December 1975 - January 1976 campaign. These events threatened our revolution with abandonment and with the possibility of leadership steering towards the wrong path through either defeatism and surrender or through adventurous leftism. On the whole, we have been able to stabilize and generalize the revolutionary line that completely rejects all deviations to the revolutionary course, that fully absorbs the scientific lessons of the temporary setback and its causes, and that preserves the spirit of determination and of the continuity of the struggle in all its forms until final victory. At the same time, the revolution has had to discard the dangers of despondency and rash feelings. We have worked hard to root this line deeply among our fighting people throughout the motherland. We have made great strides in implementing this aspect of our transitional program and in strengthening the political and ideological stance of our members as well as in strengthening the organizational unity and

cohesiveness in political doctrine on the basis of our revolutionary tradition and on the democratic centralist method of revolutionary work. We have also been able to introduce a number of improvements and have made important strides in increasing the military capability of our leaders and rank and file.

In general, we have made tangible progress toward enlarging the social base of the revolution; we have expanded our cell structure and have made concrete improvements in the trade unions and other organizations of the masses with the objective of clarifying the diverse national issues and problems of all sectors of our population and of solving their economic and social problems. We continue to advance on this road. There is a lot of work ahead to consolidate these gains and to take on other tasks necessary to prepare the subjective and objective conditions that will permit a new growth and advance in the spirit of the revolution to confront foreign forces and the agent provocateur regime in Muscat in a firm and manysided manner. The complete restoration of the subjective confidence of the Front is not far off nor does this aim conflict with the task of armed combat against the foreign presence and against the agent provocateur, Sultan Qabus and his regime. On the contrary, it is a prerequisite that this state of warfare exists in particular forms including even the peoples' war wherever appropriate conditions permit. Thus, during the last two years in which we were rebuilding the internal structure of the Front, we were simultaneously pursuing our struggle against the foreign occupation and against the agent provocateur in all the forms of warfare available including occasional important military operations.

To continue the struggle in accordance with a deliberate and organized strategy assists in developing the internal strength of the revolution and the objective circumstances of the political and social life of our people provided it is accomplished in accordance with a correct vision of the revolutionary operation and its forms of struggle as specified in the current transitional program.

In the past we committed a number of erros and fell into traps. Now we are facing the task of really understanding and correcting these errors and pitfalls. We are safeguarding ourselves from their repetition. The subsequent practice of the revolution must start from the thorough understanding of the errors of early difficulties. We must utilize all the lessons we extracted from previous efforts both negative and positive and employ them to shape new progress and victories on a much firmer foundation. Only then can we guarantee uninterrupted progress toward the desired objectives of our people. When we began the current historical analysis to reconstruct our organization on the basis of past experience and to continue the struggle, we did not start from scratch nor are we writing on a blank sheet of paper. We have a vast reserve of empirical knowledge which, besides our errors and pitfalls, includes immense riches, wonderful accomplishments and victories which we cherish and which we are in the process of developing into a firm foundation for the future of the revolution.

Q: What, in the opinion of the PFLO's leadership, are the most important and urgent objective tasks that face the revolution now in the light of all the developments in the general political situation and in the internal situation of the revolution?

A: Certainly there are a number of basic, major tasks specified in our political program and in the current transition program. The revolution must exert its utmost strength to achieve these tasks, relying first and foremost on our people and their fighting capacity and on the important support we receive from various parts of the revolutionary movement hostile to imperialism and dedicated to liberty, progress and peace in both the Arab and international spheres. We believe that urgent demands face our revolution and our people. The foremost of these demands is the enlargement of the social base of the revolution to include all Omani nationalists with their whole range of political and ideological views. The nature of the revolution in our country, particularly under present day circumstances, requires the creation of a much wider class alliance made possible by the foreign presence in our country and by the common demand for genuine independ-

ence and liberty. The question is to create the enlarged Omani united front - which embraces all the denominations and political groups, be they small or weak, and all nationalists - around a set common program defining the basic historical tasks which encompass all the problems of our people. For all the national classes, sects and groupings share the primary objective of ousting foreign troops from our country, including Egyptian troops, as well as the demands connected to the struggle for an independent foreign policy supporting the causes of the Arab nation in the forefront of which is the cause of Palestine. The struggle to organize all Omani nationals around specified objectives constitutes a current basic and central task of the revolution. The prevailing political situation in the Sultanate, which increasingly gives itself to the imperialist powers and turns on the green light for the entrance of more foreign troops, whose tyranny, repression and intimidation daily increases, requires that we enter this struggle against this policy and its architects with all possible and appropriate forms.

The fundamental question now before us is the question of the political strategy of the revolution. Our strategy occupies a position of great importance both in the Gulf region and in the Arab world in general and even on the international scene. The purpose is to tighten the prevailing isolation of the Qabus regime which follows full steam ahead the new imperialist-Zionist-Sadat plan thereby placing this regime into a tight and shrinking corner of the Arab and international political and diplomatic stage and to further isolate the Sultan into a narrow corner on the internal, national stage.

Our people, and all the Arab peoples, cannot accept Oman's present course, as the local chaperone of imperialism and Zionism and backer of their schemes. The regime goes against and enters into enmity with Arab solidarity and with the aim of realizing the demands of the Arab people for liberation including the demands of the Palestinian Arabs. These are now clearcut tasks before us at this juncture aside from continuing the advance in our internal program which requires the reconstruction of the PFLO's internal affairs.

Q: What about the development of the foreign relations of

the Front. What has been accomplished so far?

A: The foreign relations of the revolution have a continuous and increasingly great importance. This importance undoubtedly increased because of the recent political events and new conditions in the entire area, particularly after the triumph of the Iranian revolution, after the ratification of the American-Israeli-Sadat peace agreement and after new developments which ensued from these two important events. In addition new hostile maneuvers and a bitter imperialist attack, now led by the United States of America, to offset its huge losses and strategic weaknesses, such as the recent events in Iran and earlier occurrences in Viet Nam, South East Asia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and so forth, has strengthened the relations among the diverse branches of the Arab and international revolutions. It has strengthened the connections among the branches of the Arab revolution on both the mass and state levels on the one hand and among all the branches of the Arab revolutionary movement together with the branches of the international revolutionary movement as represented by the Socialist states, the international democratic national liberation movements and the proletarian parties in capitalist countries on the other. The primary element of strengthening these connections, of cementing and solidifying the links between these branches, including our revolution, is a matter the importance of which is more and more confirmed by the passage of time. Now, more than ever before, it occupies a prominent place and constitutes one of the fundamental prerequisites for the realization of a successful and victorious confrontation against international imperialism, Zionism, apartheid and reaction and for serving the international struggle of all peoples for liberation, progress, democracy and peace in the world.

As far as we are concerned, we give special attention to the Arab national field with the necessary of always promoting the relations, connections and solidarity with the Confrontation and Steadfastness Front.

With regard to the international field, we place in a special standing and give a special importance to principled relations and solidarity with the socialist

states, the Soviet Union being in the vanguard, and at the same time we pay attention to the relations with the other branches of the Arab and international revolutionary movements, organizations and to all national, democratic and progressive parties in the field of Arab nationalism and the international field. In the official Arab sector, we are making our best effort to enlarge our circle of friends to the widest possible extent and are narrowing the circle of our enemies as much as possible. Therefore, aside from the importance of strengthening our relations and ties with the confrontation and steadfastness states, we are endeavoring to win more friends and allies and to neutralize more parties which were drawn or continue to be drawn to support the satellite regime in Muscat. Our direction in the Arab field is to create a general Arab position against the stationing of foreign troops in our country, against the aggressive policy applied to the Arab nation, and against the solidarity with imperialism and Zionism practiced by the Muscat regime and to give more weight on maintaining this stance firmly and consistently. Lately we have seen a remarkable development in the relations of the Front in the national field particularly after the hidden real face of the regime has been exposed as an opponent of the aspirations and hopes of the Arab nation and of Arab unity, particularly after the American-Israeli-Sadat peace and alliance agreement has been ratified. This development in the Front's relations is no longer totally restricted, as in the past, to the relations and ties with the Confrontation and Steadfastness Front. We have expended and will continue to expend more energy and vigor towards establishing more relations and links with all the Arab states whom we feel are opposed, to any degree, with the political line followed by the regime in Muscat. We consider at the same time that our relations and our solidarity with the national and democratic powers in the Gulf area are matters of special importance. We Omani nationals confront a particular enemy - the foreign imperialist presence and the satellite regime of Qabus which approves this presence. On this basis we have absolute revolutionary and political legitimacy for our cause and for our victory. We must enlarge our relations with all the Arab regimes. This is not only necessary for the inter-

ests of Omani nationalism but also for the national interest of the Arab nation.

Our political activities during this phase and the coming phases of the Arab struggle basically start from the importance and necessity of finding the widest possible Arab opposition to the presence of foreign bases in our country and to the treacherous political line followed by the regime of Qabus vis-a-vis Arab causes.

(The interview was published in the English edition of Saut Al-Thawra, the bulletin of the PFLO, No.28, August 1979. In order to improve the English, it has been extensively paraphrased for News from Oman).

Interview with Hussein Musa, representative for the Popular Front in Bahrain, May 79. Reprinted from PFLP Bulletin nr.28, June 1979.

What is the background for the emergence of the Popular Front in Bahrain?

Politically and organizationally, the origin of the Popular Front can be traced to the breakdown of the Arab National Movement in 1968 and the emergence of its left. In the Gulf area, you had the Revolutionary Movement in Oman and the Arab Gulf.

The Revolutionary Movement moved into alliances with local democratic and patriotic forces to form the National Democratic Front in Oman and the Arab Gulf.

This movement towards local alliances was determined by the political division of the area and the prevailing regional tendencies. An additional factor was repression, which necessitated clandestine organization, making it difficult to establish and maintain one unified organizational structure throughout the area. These factors were reflected on the organizational level, although the revolutionary movement in the Gulf basically adhered to a common political line.

The formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) in 1971 expressed the tendency to establish a unified organization in the entire area. This tendency was strong at the time and was well founded in the objective conditions: British domination prevailed throughout the area and few specifically national institutions existed.

At the time, the British plan was to establish a federation from Oman to Kuwait, including what is now Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, other interests converged to prevent the realization of this project of British colonialism. Iran was opposed due to its claims on Bahrain. Saudi Arabia opposed such a federation as it could have been a strong state, detracting from the Saudi role. In addition, American imperialism aimed at surplanting the traditional British dominance throughout the Gulf area and thus was against this federation which would have been infiltrated with British advisors, reinforcing specifically British control.

A compromise was reached in 1971 whereby the United Arab Emirates was formed as a state, but excluding Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman from the original British plan.

It is important to understand this development in order to grasp the two conflicting tendencies in the Gulf. On the one hand, there is the popular aspiration towards unity as manifested in the formation of the PFLOAG. On the other hand, there is a system of tribal privileges, based on the power of the sheiks and amirs and reinforced by colonial interference in the area, which is best retained by division.

By 1971 all the Gulf states had been granted formal political independence but the manner in which this occured only served to revive division. Separate institutions were created for these newly formed states.

We as Bahraini patriots, as well as all the revolutionary forces in the Gulf, were forced to discuss the new objective situation created with the formation of independent states such as the UAE and the effects of the increased oil revenues. The conference in 1974 decided that it was not effective to have a single organization for the whole area due to the widely diverging conditions. In Oman there was open armed struggle, In Bahrain you have an American military base. In Kuwait a neo-colonial system prevails although there is no foreign military presence. This conference marked the emergence of the Popular Front in Bahrain, the PFLO, etc. as separate organizational entities but retaining a common political formula.

Can you elaborate on the political situation in the Gulf at this time?

Again, it is necessary to talk about the enforced political division of the area. The UAE is a mosaic determined by tribal patterns. The tribes have lived scattered and intermingled. Statehood has been superimposed on these tribal patterns. Abu Dhabi has not been a country. It was a tribal entity, a village. This applies to the Emirates in general. The tribal system is based on the sheik's political authority plus his ownership. He *is* the state. This makes it difficult to establish a unified state. As an example, in the UAE, the oil is not a mutual affair. It is each amir's affair. Although the tribal structure itself has been basically destroyed, tribal affiliations remain and are reinforced by the granting of privileges on a tribal basis. In addition, existing religious differences are exploited by the regimes.

Bahrain was just land, a territory. Now it is being evolved into a state. From our point of view, the formation of a state in Bahrain must be a step in creating one nation for the Gulf area. This is a point of difference between us and the traditional communists. They want to establish an independent democratic republic in Bahrain. We think this is impossible.

The importance of the question of unity is being accentuated today. Following the Iranian Revolution, new projects for unification of the Gulf states have been presented on the official level. The progressive forces must present an alternative formula for this unity. This is a key point in our relationship with other organizations in the area. We are very keen to have relations with other organizations who share our goal of creating one nation. This is the basis of our close relation to the PFLO, which shares our view that the division has been imposed, and to the Democratic Kuwaitis as well.

It is also necessary to examine the scope of the struggle in our area. At present, we lack a class basis in the Gulf area to topple the oil states. The oil revenue has been used to divide the society, granting privileges to citizens and allowing increased importation of workers from Asia or the other Arab countries, who as non-citizens are officially excluded from political life. The majority of citizens are drawn into the expanding service economy (for example as shop-keepers) or recruited into the army, the national guard or the newly created state administration. One can say that the society has been tamed and the mode of struggle is therefore different than in Oman, where a popular war of liberation developed. In the other Gulf states, the struggle concentrates on democratic rights.

The majority of the population in Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE are not citizens. Oman is the only clear-cut exception on this point. In Bahrain which has a total population of 370,000, you have 120,000 workers who are non-citizens. You have 1 1/2 million Yemenis in Saudi Arabia out of a total population of 5 million. In Kuwait there are 100,000 Egyptians who are isolated from the local population. It is imperative that the progressive forces develop a program that can unify and mobilize both citizens and foreign workers. This demands close cooperation between the progressive forces in the area as a whole.

Can you tell about the efforts towards unity?

In the Gulf, we can see three main ideological trends among the progressive forces. The first is the progressive nationalist tendency, best represented by the Democratic Assembly in Kuwait, which works for democratic institutions and the redistribution of wealth. This tendency also exists in Oman and Bahrain, but not as an organization.

Second, we have the traditional communist parties, such as the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain this line is represented by the National Liberation Front.

Third, there is the new left which emerged from the Arab National Movement in 1968, represented by the PFLO in Oman and the Popular Front in Bahrain. We are able to ally with forces who agree upon our political line, but not necessarily our ideology.

We work to establish alliances on both the local and Gulf level. Of course, these levels are interrelated. There have been several meetings for the progressive organizations in the Gulf, resulting in joint political statements. Coordination exists between these organizations. We are now working on an organizational formula to stabilize this relationship. A fundamental problem for the progressive forces in our area is to develop the means of realizing broad alliances. In the Arab World in general, we lack experience with broad fronts. In Oman there is one organization leading the struggle, but in the other Gulf states, it is important that organizations existing side-by-side learn to function in a unified manner.

In Bahrain we are carrying on serious discussions with the NLF to reach a common program. In 1972 and in 1975 we have attained a common position with the NLF against the regime's campaign of repression. But we have yet to establish a common leadership body or merge our popular organizations.

We have women's, students' and workers' unions which are politically affiliated as does the NLF. So far, we have been able to form a common student organization. We are working to have common mass organizations in all fields.

What are the effects of the Iranian Revolution in the Gulf?

The strength of the reactionary forces, particularly the Shah's Iran and Saudi Arabia, has created a ceiling for popular uprisings in the area. For example, the uprising in Bahrain in 1972 was crushed by the Saudi National Guard. Political blackmail has also been practiced. In 1969 the national movement was developing rapidly in Bahrain. In response the government made a referendum asking the population to choose between the regime and being under Iranian control. The regimes have been able to threaten the national movement with Iran because the Shah has been ready to intervene. The pivotal points in the Gulf are Oman, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Any change in these places will reflect on the rest of the Gulf states. If the struggle in Oman had succeeded, we would have a different situation in the entire area today. But with the counter-revolutionary trend after the October War, the strengthening of reaction and the Iranian intervention in Oman, the PFLO was placed on the defensive. Now with the fall of the Shah, the strongest gendarme in the area is abolished.

Obviously, the Omani Revolution has more favorable conditions after the fall of the Shah regime. Although Egyptian troops have replaced the Iranians, Egypt has more problems in intervening effectively against the Revolution than the Shah did. Egypt is farther away and has problems on other fronts.

In a way, the role of the Iranian Revolution can be compared to that of Nasserism. While it has no organizational extension, it is a trend influencing the entire area. The Iranian Revolution has released popular hope and aspirations throughout the Gulf. It signalled a revival of political activities. This has been reflected in spontaneous demonstrations in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain in support of the revolution.

We are also witnessing the evolvement of a democratic religious movement in the Gulf. Traditionally the religious leaders have been a part of the regimes and their institutions, sharing their privileges. They have been mobilized on an anti-communist basis. Now we see a split whereby progressive mullahs, particularly from the lower ranks, are joining the democratic movement. The Kuwaiti Democratic Assembly

includes religious figures. In February, democratic religious elements joined the demonstration in Bahrain supporting the Iranian Revolution.

If the Iranian Revolution takes a positive stand towards the progressive movements in the area, this would have important consequences for our struggle. But until now, it has been hesitant.

We are seeing other moves after the fall of the Shah. American surveillance stations have been transferred to Dubai and Bahrain. We have reason to believe that a number of SAVAK agents have taken cover in the Gulf states. If the US sets out to crush the Iranian Revolution, it could use the Gulf as a springboard.

The fall of the Shah forced a reorganization of the reactionary strategy in the area. The US strategy is to 'Arabize' the Gulf Security Pact. There are attempts to establish a regional organization of the Gulf states. There are now regular meetings for the ministers of the interior, finance, etc. with the aim of forming a block in Arab and international politics. It is important to note that this coordination does not tend towards the creation of a unified state. There is no move towards real economic integration. Rather there is increased cooperation on matters pertaining to security to fight the progressive movement. Exchange of intelligence and extradition are increasing. There are now permanent Saudi military missions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE.

There are new attempts to solve the border conflict between Oman and the UAE and the conflict over marine areas between Bahrain and Qatar, between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Kuwaiti Prime Minister failed to solve these conflicts during his tour in the area. Prince Fahd was scheduled to make a tour to resolve these problems, but disagreement within the Saudi ruling family postponed his trip.

How do you see the relation between the situation in the Gulf and the Arab World as a whole after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty?

The Arab cause is an ever present factor in the Gulf. There are many Palestinians living here and there is a long tradition of popular reaction to Arab causes. The March demonstration in Kuwait protesting the agreement was the largest since 1967.

We had expected an agreement between Saudi Arabia, 'Israel', Egypt and Iran. Then the Shah regime fell and Egypt went too fast for the rest of Arab reaction. Now Egypt has taken the same position towards the Palestinians as 'Israel'.

What is the position of Saudi Arabia in this new situation? Saudi Arabia has attempted to pose as patriotic by espousing Arab unity and support to the PLO and by not entering into negotiations with 'Israel'. It is significant to note that Prince Abdullah (second deputy to the king and commander of the National Guard) who is presented as 'pro-Arab' within the Saudi family, is emphasizing the importance of

the US in the settlement. Internal contradictions in the Saudi family and contradictions with the US, although secondary, as to how the settlement should be achieved, have weakened the Saudi position in Arab politics, relatively speaking. You might say that the Saudis are embarrassed. They are trying to buy time until a future Geneva conference.

The important question for the progressive forces is how to exploit this situation. The latest agreement between Egypt and 'Israel' requires a more decisive stand. All the Gulf states, except the Qabus regime in Oman which follows Sadat's policy, and Kuwait, which is relatively independent, follow the Saudi line. At the Baghdad conference they worked to modify the resolutions and prevent any measures againt US-imperialism.

We find that the best way to exploit this situation is not by emphasizing Sadat, but by emphasizing the relationship between Arab reaction and US-imperialism. This is what we are doing in our propaganda. There is an American base in Bahrain. The US has established a new port in Jabal Ali in the UAE, part of which is reserved for the US Navy. In reality, the ties between Saudi Arabia and the US are expanding. There are 30,000 Americans committed here as military or administrative advisors. There exists an explicit agreement on US intervention in case the Saudi regime is endangered. The Sultanate of Oman openly invited the US to strengthen its military presence at Masirah base and urged the establishment of new American bases in Oman and reinforced naval power in the Arabian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

The role of Arab reaction in relation to imperialism is quite clear. Sadat has begun playing the role of gendarme in local conflicts, but you still have a fluid situation in the area. Imperialism must find out how to arrange the reactionary alliance between Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan. It is the task of the revolutionary forces in the entire area to exploit this situation, to push for polarization between the progressive and reactionary forces in order to clarify which forces are ready to confront the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary alliance.

The Baghdad Summit did not clarify this issue. There was no strong core to push for this polarization, or to push for measures against the US. Until this happens, the Saudi regime still has maneuvering room. If the Front of Steadfastness and Confrontation does not become this core, Saudi Arabia will not be forced to show its true color, which is alliance with imperialism.

Bahraini
Youth Organization

RHODESIAN AIR FORCE PILOTS TRAINED IN OMAN

In the October issue of the London based 'New African' magazine it is uncovered that a group of Rhodesian Air Force pilots visited Oman on a special training course at the air base in Salalah in October 1978. The course was leaded by British pilots who are either stationed in Oman on secondment to the army of Sultan Qaboos or are there on mercenary contracts. The Rhodesian pilots were trained in the advanced US Huey helicopter gunships. These are specially well qualified to anti-guerilla warfare and were used by the Americans during the war in Vietnam. On the course the British pilots had the opportunity of teaching their Rhodesian 'fellow fighters' what they have learnt from the last 14 years of struggle against the PFLO.

The Rhodesian Air Force have received 11 US Huey helicopter gunships from Israel. The US Government had granted the Israelis an export license for Singapore, but Rhodesia was the real destination. At the moment a US Commerce Department investigation, instigated by the State Department, is trying to determine who was behind the affair. It is considered to be highly unlikely that the US Intelligence Service was ignorant of the destination of the helicopters(see 'New African, August 1979). The helicopters were first seen in action against ZANU guerillas in November 1978. Mozambique has reported that Rhodesian pilots trained in Oman were in action in the recent attacks on Mozambique.

According to 'New African' the course was not officially arranged by the Omani Government. The Magazine indicates that the key figure behind the affair was the former British officer Tim Landon. It was he, who arranged the course, and also, via his buisiness interests in Singapore, the sale of the helicopter gunships to Rhodesia. Landon was Lieutenant in the British Army before his arrival in Oman in 1965. After a two-year duty as officer he returned to Britain for a course in army intelligence work and returned to Oman as the Sultan's Chief Intelligence Officer. He is supposed to have masterminded the coup in 197o when the old Sultan Said bin Taimur was deposed, and his son Qaboos came to power. Qaboos and Landon knew each other from their military training in Britain. After the coup Landon commanded Qaboos' army until 1975

and was one of the Sultan's closest collaborators. In 1975 he retired and became special adviser to Qaboos. Landon lives in a heavily fortified house in the protected section of Muscat and has been intensely shy of publicity ever since his arrival in Oman. He never gives interviews and only goes out under heavy escort. He is considered to be the man behind the military export orders for British firms, but have lately placed more orders in the US. Landon owns in addition to mansions in the south of France, in London's Mayfair, in Hampshire in the south of England and in Cyprus also a ranch in Rhodesia.

Landon's sympathy with the settler-regime in Zimbabwe is well-known. He is an old friend of Pieter van der Byl, the former Defence Minister and now Minister of Transport in Salisbury. Another very close friend of his is Peter Walls, Commander-in-Chief of Rhodesia's armed forces. Last year Peter Walls holidayed in Oman.

As 'New African' indicates the investigation of the affair will throw light on the international web of lies that coversthe route by which the Rhodesian regime gets its arms supplies.

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